SHADOW STRIKES
24
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THE Shadow STRIKES!
MARGO'S STORY
JONES, WHIGHAM & FERNANDEZ

MY NAME'S HARRY VINCENT AND I'VE BEEN DEAD FOR SIX YEARS.
I CAN BARELY REMEMBER WHEN I WAS ALIVE AND I ACTUALLY HAD PLANS FOR THE FUTURE. I JUST REMEMBER WHAT THE DEPRESSION DID TO THOSE PLANS, AND HOW I DECIDED TO TAKE A SWAN DIVE OFF THAT BRIDGE.
AND HOW AT THE LAST SECOND SOMEBODY CALLED THE SHADOW SAVED ME. AND FROM THEN ON I ONLY LIVED THROUGH HIM.
I WORKED WHEN HE WANTED ME TO, AND I SLEPT WHEN HE WANTED, AND I CHASED SKIRTS WHEN HE SAID I COULD.
NO GIRLFRIEND, NO WIFE. JUST SKIRTS. JUST BODIES. A DEAD MAN CAN'T ASK FOR ANY MORE THAN A BODY.
MARGO'S STORY
BUT THEN I TRIED TO COME BACK TO LIFE AGAIN. I FELL FOR ANOTHER ONE OF THE BOSS' LIVING CORPSES, A REAL SWEET CORPSE NAMED MARGO LANE.
AND BECAUSE OF HER, I'M DEAD AGAIN.

FROM HARRY VINCENT'S SECRET ANNALS, AS TOLD TO: GERARD JONES, WRITER. ROD WHIGHAM, PENCILLER. GERRY FERNANDEZ, INKER. BOB PINAHA, LETTERER. ANTHONY TOLLIN, COLORIST. BRIAN AUGUSTYN, EDITOR.

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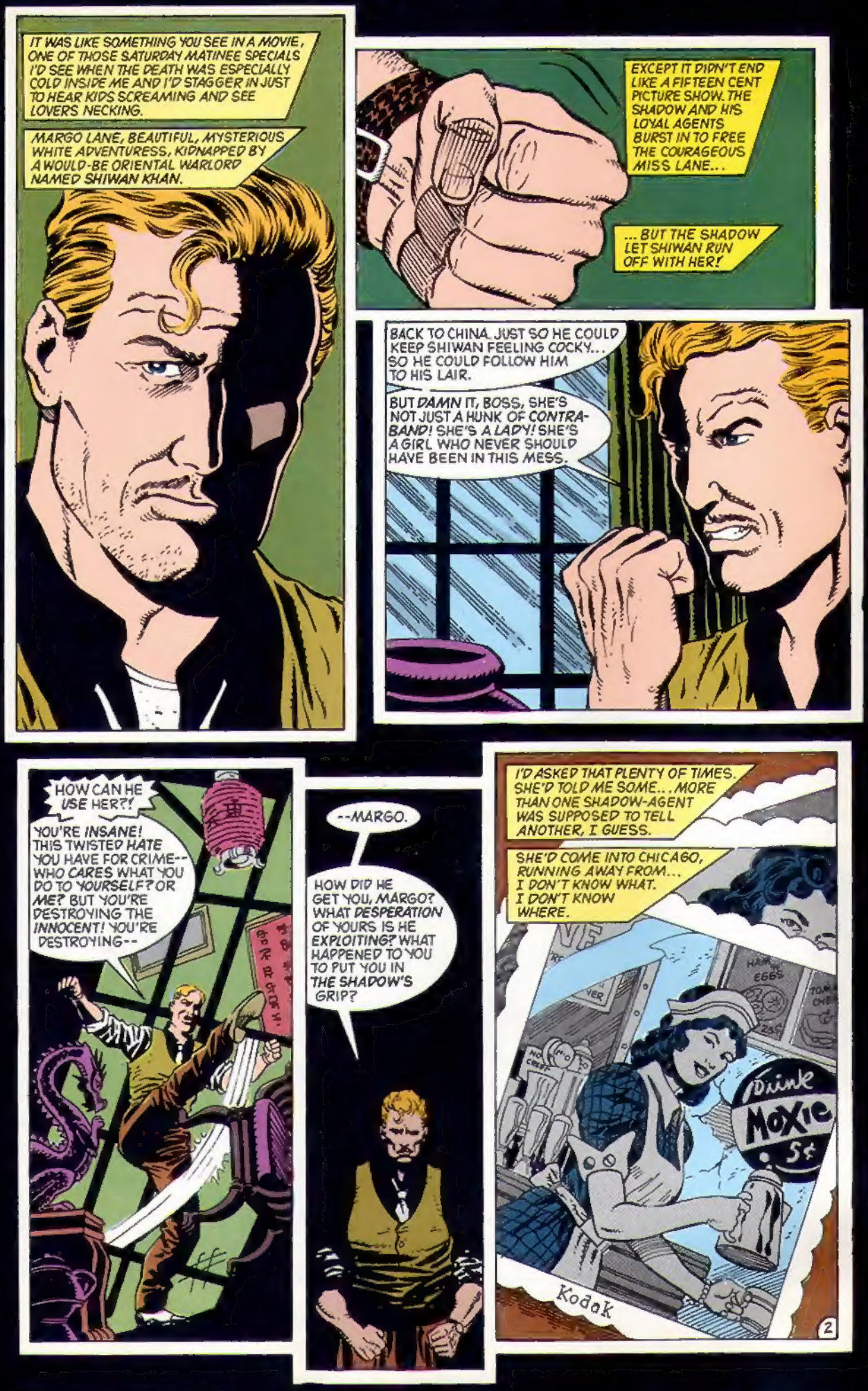
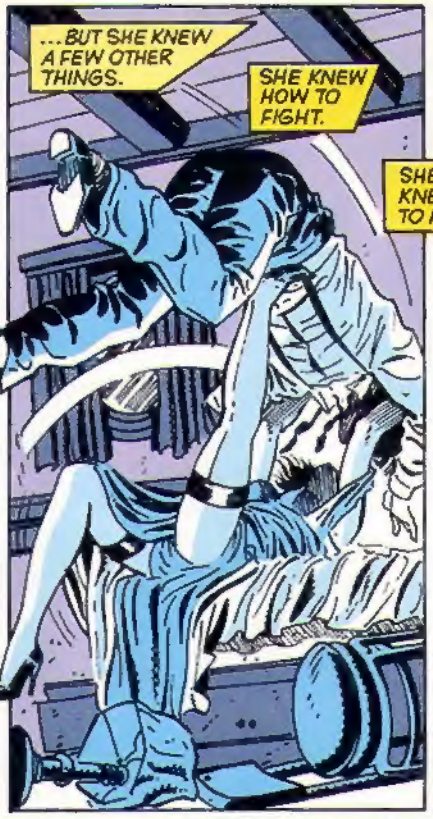

IT WAS LIKE SOMETHING YOU SEE IN A MOVIE, ONE OF THOSE SATURDAY MATINEE SPECIALS I'D SEE WHEN THE DEATH WAS ESPECIALLY COLD INSIDE ME AND I'D STAGGER IN JUST TO HEAR KIDS SCREAMING AND SEE LOVERS NECKING.
MARGO LANE, BEAUTIFUL, MYSTERIOUS WHITE ADVENTURESS, KIDNAPPED BY A WOULD-BE ORIENTAL WARLORD NAMED SHIWAN KHAN.
EXCEPT IT DIDN'T END LIKE A FIFTEEN CENT PICTURE SHOW. THE SHADOW AND HIS LOYAL AGENTS BURST IN TO FREE THE COURAGEOUS MISS LANE...
... BUT THE SHADOW LET SHIWAN RUN OFF WITH HER!
BACK TO CHINA. JUST SO HE COULD KEEP SHIWAN FEELING COCKY... SO HE COULD FOLLOW HIM TO HIS LAIR.
BUT DAMN IT, BOSS, SHE'S NOT JUST A HUNK OF CONTRABAND! SHE'S A LADY! SHE'S A GIRL WHO NEVER SHOULD HAVE BEEN IN THIS MESS.
HOW CAN HE USE HER?!
YOU'RE INSANE! THIS TWISTED HATE YOU HAVE FOR CRIME-- WHO CARES WHAT YOU DO TO YOURSELF? OR ME? BUT YOU'RE DESTROYING THE INNOCENT! YOU'RE DESTROYING--
--MARGO.
HOW DID HE GET YOU, MARGO? WHAT DESPERATION OF YOURS IS HE EXPLOITING? WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU TO PUT YOU IN THE SHADOW'S GRIP?
I'D ASKED THAT PLENTY OF TIMES. SHE'D TOLD ME SOME... MORE THAN ONE SHADOW-AGENT WAS SUPPOSED TO TELL ANOTHER, I GUESS.
SHE'D COME INTO CHICAGO, RUNNING AWAY FROM... I DON'T KNOW WHAT. I DON'T KNOW WHERE.
Drink Moxie 5¢
Kodak
2

SHE'D HOOKED A RICH GUY, TASTED HIGH SOCIETY, THEN GOT BOOTED OUT WHEN HE RAN AFOUL OF THE LAW AND PULLED A DISAPPEARING ACT.
"MARGARET EVANS" DISAPPEARED LIKE SHE'D NEVER BEEN.
ANARCHY
POLIC
A FEW MONTHS LATER, "MARGO LANE" MATERIALIZED ON A CRUISE SHIP WITH NOTHING BUT A BERTH, A TRUNK FULL OF CLOTHES, AND ONE PLAN...
...TO HOOK A TYCOON.
SHE SAID SHE FELT DIRTY--BUT THERE WAS A DEPRESSION ON. "AND ALL I KNEW," SHE SAID, "WAS MEN."
HER FIRST CAST DIDN'T EVEN GET A NIBBLE...
I'LL LEAVE YOU TO THE MAGIC OF THE TROPICS, MISS LANE. I'M HERE FOR WORK, NOT ENJOYMENT.
JUST DON'T FALL IN THE WATER. YOU MIGHT FREEZE THE OTHER FISH.
...BUT HER SECOND HOOKED A BIG ONE. A RIPE, JUICY FRUIT MOGUL FROM CENTRAL AMERICA.
GOOD FOR A YEAR OF ROULETTE AND RUM, SHE SAID. AND THEN A SETTLEMENT THAT WOULD PAY HER WAY IN NEW YORK.
S.S. MA
TROUBLE WAS, HE WAS ALSO A GUN-DEALING THUG PLOTTING TO OVERTHROW HIS COUNTRY'S ELECTED GOVERNMENT. HE WAS THE BOSS' TARGET THAT TRIP.
MISS LANE?
ASK NO QUESTIONS ABOUT ME, MISS LANE. ONLY ASK HIM QUESTIONS... AND GIVE ME HIS ANSWERS.
SHE KNEW IT WAS STUPID TO AGREE. BUT SOMEHOW SHE COULDN'T HELP HERSELF.
3

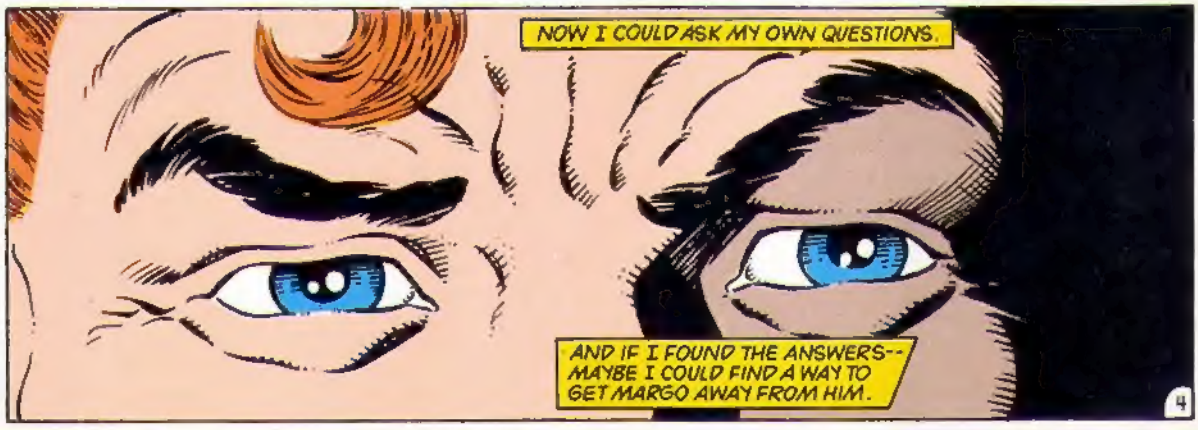
SHE WASN'T SO SLICK THEN. HER NEW BEAU FOUND HER OUT PRETTY QUICK. MAYBE SHE DIDN'T KNOW MEN AS WELL AS SHE THOUGHT...


...BUT SHE KNEW A FEW OTHER THINGS.
SHE KNEW HOW TO FIGHT.

SHE EVEN KNEW HOW TO KILL.
HOW? THAT SHE NEVER TOLD ME.

AND WHY'D SHE SAY WHAT SHE DID WHEN HE ASKED HER TO GIVE HER LIFE TO HIS BLOODY WORK?
YOU'VE GIVEN ME THE ONE THING I NEVER HAD.

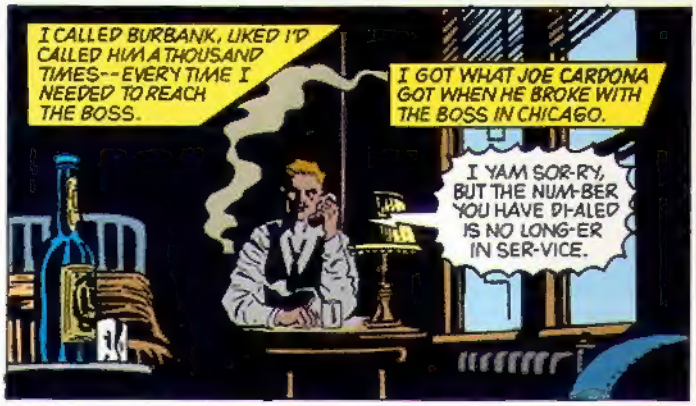
NO ANSWER TO THAT, EITHER. AND I'D DROPPED ALL MY QUESTIONS--BECAUSE HE TOLD ME TO.
BUT NOW I WAS ON MY OWN. NOW THE BOSS HAD DROPPED ME FOR NOT GOING ALONG WITH HIS PLANS.
NOW HE'D TAKEN AWAY THAT IMITATION LIFE HE GAVE ME SIX YEARS AGO.


NOW I COULD ASK MY OWN QUESTIONS.
AND IF I FOUND THE ANSWERS--MAYBE I COULD FIND A WAY TO GET MARGO AWAY FROM HIM.

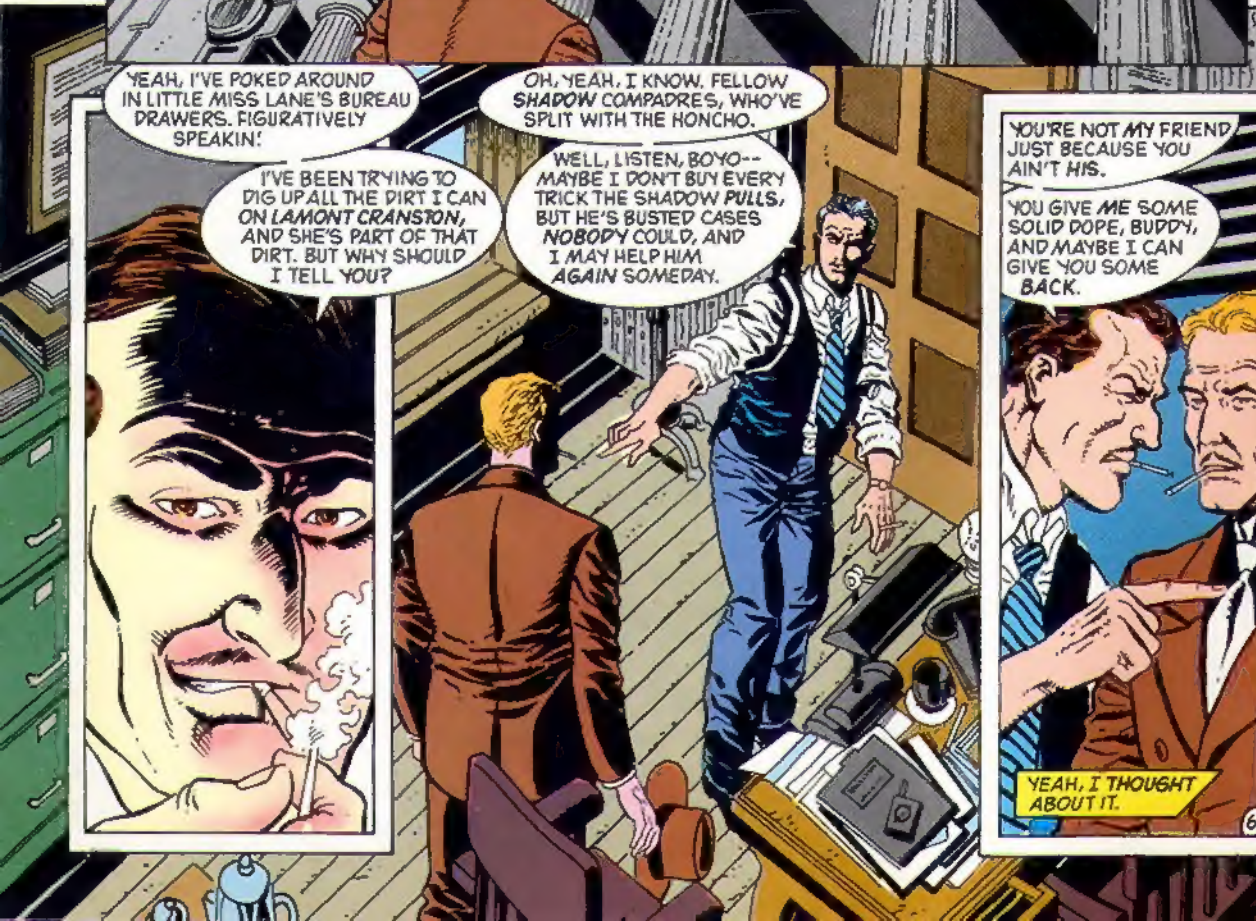
RING RING
TRIBUNE. HECK HERE.
VINCENT?! HELL YEAH, I REMEMBER YOU. HOW COULD I FORGET ANYBODY WHO WAS WORKING WITH THE... YOU KNOW WHO.
THE LANE DAME? LISTEN, VINCENT, IF I REMEMBER YOU, I'M SURE AS HELL NOT GONNA FORGET...
...HER BACKGROUND, HUH? OH, YEAH. I'M SURE I CAN DIG UP SOMETHING! YOU WANT TO TELL ME WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT?
AW-HECK!
KLIK
SO WHAT DID I EXPECT?
NO. I DON'T SEE YOU NO MORE, VINCENT.
COME ON, SHREVVY. YOU'VE GIVEN MARGO RIDES NEARLY EVERY DAY FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS. YOU MUST KNOW--
IT TEARS MY HEART OUT TO SAY THIS, VINCENT... BUT THE CHIEF SAYS YOU'RE NOT WITH US NO MORE.
I JUST DON'T SEE YOU.
RITZ
BULLETS OR BALLOTS
AIR CONDITIONED
SHREEE

IT WAS THE SAME WITH EVERY OTHER AGENT.
COME ON, HAWKEYE. I'M NOT DOING ANYTHING TO THE BOSS. IT'S FOR MARGO.
HAWKEYE...

'EY, STEVIE--YOU LETTIN' LOONS COME IN AN' HASSLE YOUR BEST DRINKERS NOW?


I CALLED BURBANK, LIKED I'D CALLED HIM A THOUSAND TIMES--EVERY TIME I NEEDED TO REACH THE BOSS.
I GOT WHAT JOE CARDONA GOT WHEN HE BROKE WITH THE BOSS IN CHICAGO.
I YAM SOR-RY, BUT THE NUM-BER YOU HAVE DI-ALED IS NO LONG-ER IN SER-VICE.

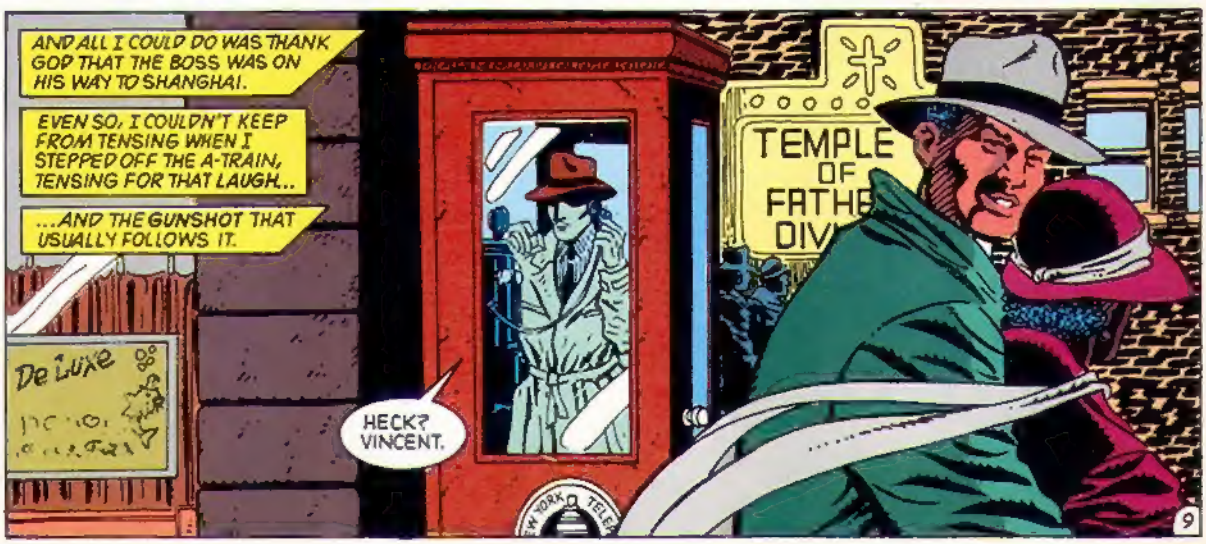
I DECIDED TO SEE IF THERE WAS ANYTHING IN THAT BREAK THAT I COULD USE.


YEAH, I'VE POKED AROUND IN LITTLE MISS LANE'S BUREAU DRAWERS. FIGURATIVELY SPEAKIN!
I'VE BEEN TRYING TO DIG UP ALL THE DIRT I CAN ON LAMONT CRANSTON, AND SHE'S PART OF THAT DIRT. BUT WHY SHOULD I TELL YOU?
OH, YEAH, I KNOW. FELLOW SHADOW COMPADRES, WHO'VE SPLIT WITH THE HONCHO.
WELL, LISTEN, BOYO--MAYBE I DON'T BUY EVERY TRICK THE SHADOW PULLS, BUT HE'S BUSTED CASES NOBODY COULD, AND I MAY HELP HIM AGAIN SOMEDAY.
YOU'RE NOT MY FRIEND JUST BECAUSE YOU AIN'T HIS.
YOU GIVE ME SOME SOLID DOPE, BUDDY, AND MAYBE I CAN GIVE YOU SOME BACK.
YEAH, I THOUGHT ABOUT IT.
6

THOUGHT ABOUT TELLING HIM THAT LAMONT CRANSTON WAS THE SHADOW. OR, AT LEAST, I THOUGHT HE WAS.
THAT WOULD ANSWER SOME QUESTIONS FOR HIM. THAT WOULD BE A NICE ITEM OF TRADE. AND WHO WAS I PROTECTING ANYMORE?
BUT I GUESS I WASN'T READY FOR THAT YET.
SORRY, INSPECTOR. I WISH I KNEW... ANYTHING.
SHOULDA GUESSED. ONCE A SHADOW-BOY, ALWAYS A SHADOW-BOY.
WELL, I'LL NAIL CRANSTON... ONE O' THESE DAYS. ALWAYS AROUND WHERE THERE'S BLOOD AND THERE'S GANGS. AROUND WHEN THE SHADOW'S AROUND.
CRANSTON, L.
BUT YOU KNOW A LILY-PALMED RICH BOY LIKE THAT AIN'T GOING TO BE WORKING FOR THE SHADOW.
YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT MARGO LANE, BOYO? I'LL TELL YOU EVERYTHING THERE IS TO KNOW...
...NOTHING!
NO PAST, NO FAMILY. NEARLY DISAPPEARS WHEN SHE'S NOT ON CRANSTON'S SCRAWNY ARM. JUST A FEW SLUMMING TRIPS TO HARLEM, THAT'S ALL.
AND WHERE CRANSTON'S CONCERNED--SHE DOESN'T EVEN MAKE SENSE!
BACK IN THE '20s, CRANSTON WAS THE PLAYBOY OF THE WESTERN WORLD. DEBS AND CHORUS GIRLS AND VASSAR TWISTS STASHED ALL OVER TOWN.
THEN HE GOES ON A TRIP. TAKES THE ORIENT EXPRESS TO ISTANBUL WITH A LITTLE CO-ED NAMED DAISY.
HE STAYS THERE WAY TOO LONG, HOOKS UP WITH A WASHED UP AVIATOR NAMED KENT ALLARD. THEN SUDDENLY THIS DAISY'S DEAD... ALLARD VANISHES... AND CRANSTON COMES BACK... CHANGED.

SUDDENLY CRANSTON GOES FOUR YEARS WITHOUT TIPPING OVER A SINGLE DAME. FINALLY HE FINDS LANE, SETS HER UP IN THE EAST NINETIES...FINE.
EXCEPT HE NEVER SPENDS THE NIGHT. HE NEVER DOES ANYTHING WITH HER. WHAT'S GOING ON, BOYO?
THAT'S WHAT I WANT TO KNOW. WHAT HAPPENED TO LAMONT CRANSTON IN ISTANBUL IN 1929?
I DIDN'T KNOW. THE BOSS ALWAYS TOLD ME, "MY PAST IS MY OWN."
WHICH FITS, FOR A GUY WHO USES PEOPLE TRYING TO ESCAPE THEIR PASTS.
WELL, CARDONA ANSWERED ONE QUESTION EVEN I'D NEVER WANTED TO ASK OUT LOUD--WHAT WENT ON BETWEEN MARGO AND "THE MASTER"?
IF HE HADN'T, WOULD I HAVE GONE TO CHECK MARGO'S BUILDING?
I DON'T KNOW. I JUST KNOW I WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN TOO KEEN ON FINDING A PAIR OF BLACK BOXER SHORTS BETWEEN MARGO'S SHEETS.
CALL ME PETTY, BUT IT FELT GOOD SPENDING HIS MONEY ON THIS...
...AND WAY MORE THAN I HAD TO, TO GET THE CLEANING LADY TO LET ME INTO MARGO'S ROOM.
I DIDN'T FIND MUCH. HARDLY A SIGN OF A PAST--OR A LIFE. EXCEPT ONE CANCELLED CHECK, MADE OUT TO...
"...JERICHO DRUKE."
DRUKE?! WHAT'S A LADY LIKE HER DOIN' PAYIN' MR. DRUKE?
YOU KNOW HIM?
MISTER, EVERYBODY IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD KNOW MR. DRUKE. HE RUN THE BIGGEST EMPLOYMENT AGENCY IN HARLEM!
8

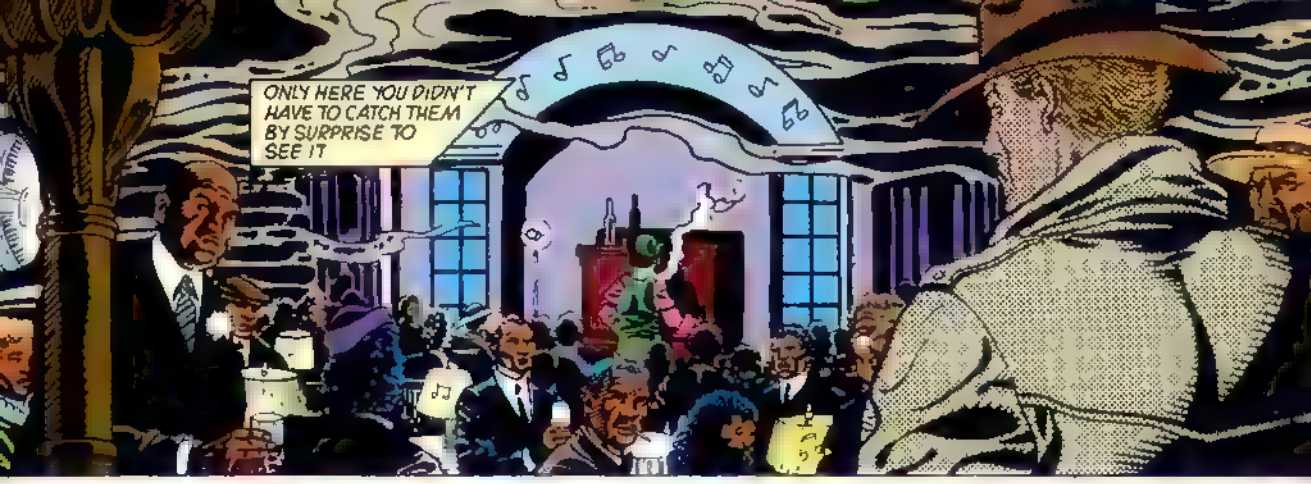
HARLEM.
RIGHT THEN I KNEW I WAS GOING DEEPER INTO MARGO'S LIFE THAN SHE'D EVER WANTED ANYBODY TO GO.
WESTING
BAR-B-Q
DANCE
SAVOY
SAVOY
BATTLE OF THE BANDS! CHICK WEBB VS. COUNT BASIE
OWN-HOME BAR-B-Q
MINTON'S CHILI HOUSE
Coca Cola
SALVATION ARMY

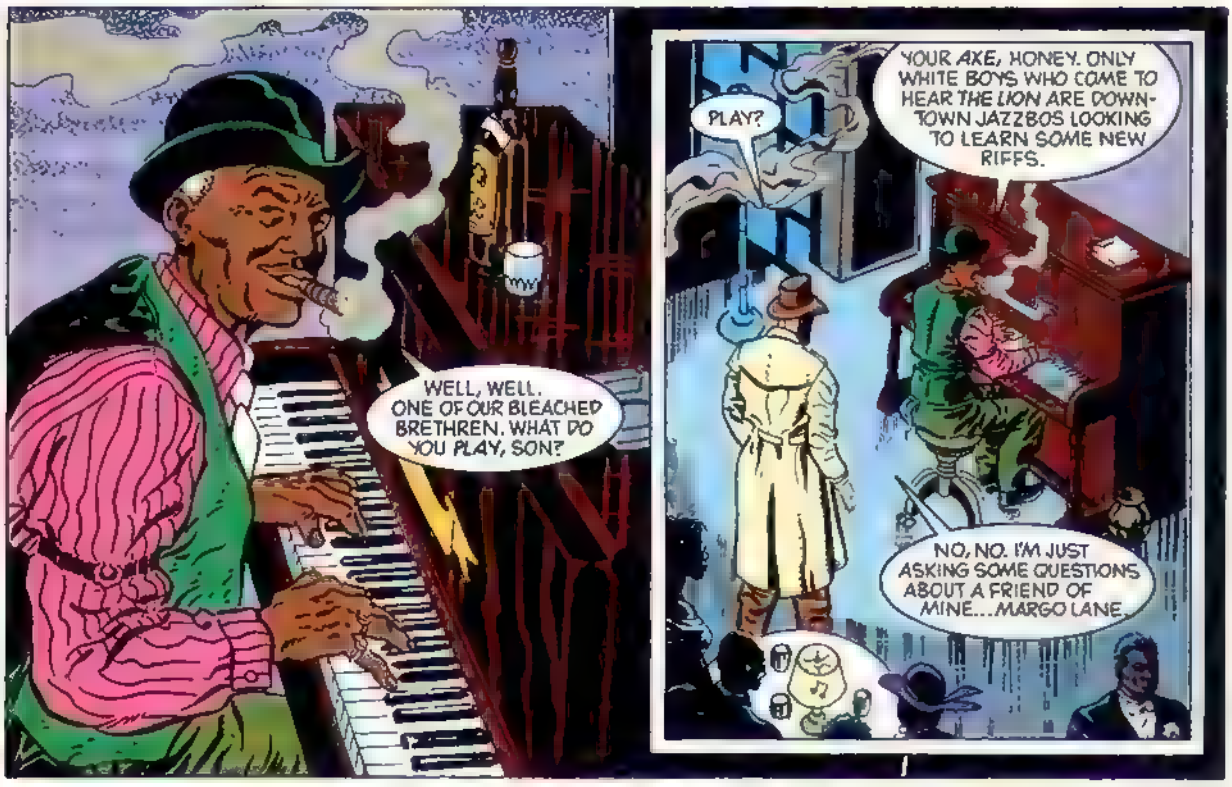

AND ALL I COULD DO WAS THANK GOD THAT THE BOSS WAS ON HIS WAY TO SHANGHAI.
EVEN SO, I COULDN'T KEEP FROM TENSING WHEN I STEPPED OFF THE A-TRAIN, TENSING FOR THAT LAUGH...
...AND THE GUNSHOT THAT USUALLY FOLLOWS IT.
De Luxe
HECK? VINCENT.
TEMPLE OF
9

THAT'S A MYSTERIOUS GAL YOU GOT THERE, BROTHER. ONE DAY SHE JUST SHOWED UP AT A DINER, LOOKING FOR WORK IN DIRTY CLOTHES AND A SOUTHERN ACCENT, GIVING THE NAME "MARGARET LORN."
LADY WHO HIRED HER SAID SHE WAS THE SWEETEST LITTLE MAGNOLIA BLOSSOM SHE EVER DID SEE...
...BUT IF A GUY GOT FRESH WITH HER SHE'D GO NUTS. BROKE SOME POOR BOZO'S ARM ONCE
YOU'RE KIDDING!
NO KID, KID. BUT SHE GOT OVER THAT HABIT QUICK ENOUGH. JUST LIKE THE MINT JULEP ACCENT.
WHO ARE YOU, MARGO? WHO WERE YOU?
JERICHO DRUKE
EMPLOYMENT FOR THE AFRO AMERICAN
AND WHO WOULD EMPLOY A FOOL DRESSED LIKE YOU?
DIG IT, GATE, I AIN'T MAKIN' THE INTERVIEW SCENE TO-NIGHT I'M--
I KNOW! GOING TO LISTEN TO YOUR WHORE-HOUSE MUSIC.
WHAT YOU WANT ME TO GROOVE TO, CAT? THE FISK INSTITUTE JUBILEE SINGERS?
ALL THE PRETTY POUND-CAKES DIG JAZZ, POPS, AND WHERE THE POUND-CAKE GO... SLY THE FLY FOL-LOW.
"POUND CAKE"? HALF YOUR PEOPLE ARE OUT OF WORK, BOY, AND YOU WASTE YOUR MONEY ON CHEAP LITTLE--
--WHO ARE YOU?
NAME'S HARRY VINCENT...
...AND I HAVE SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT A MARGO LANE.

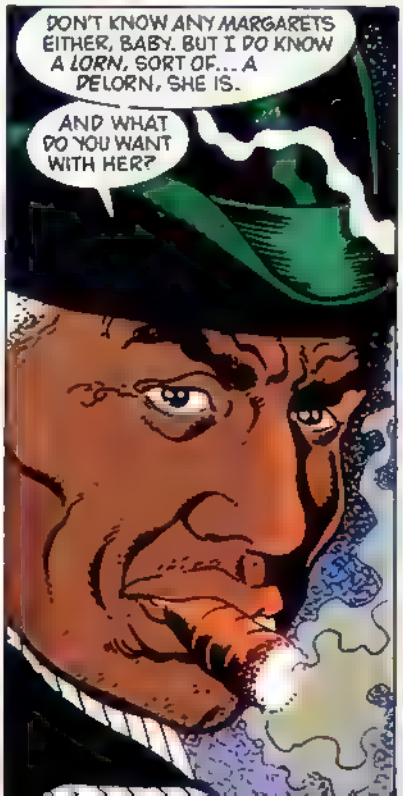
GET OUT OF HERE, BOY! I DON'T WANT TO SEE YOU UNTIL TOMORROW!
YOU AIN'T SAYING WHAT I DON'T KNOW...THE OFAY COME AND THE SOUL BROTHER GO.
YOUNG FOOLS. TOO MANY YOUNG FOOLS.
I GATHER YOU KNOW MARGO LANE.
I KNOW YOU, AGENT VINCENT--
--BUT I DON'T SEE YOU ANYMORE.
YOU'RE...ONE OF HIS. YOU'RE AN AGENT. BUT...
...I NEVER KNEW ABOUT YOU!
THERE'S A LOT YOU DON'T KNOW, IT SOUNDS LIKE.
HOW MANY OTHERS ARE THERE? HOW MANY AGENTS I NEVER KNEW ABOUT?
I DON'T KNOW. BUT WE'RE ALL OVER THE WORLD, VINCENT, IN EVERY WALK OF LIFE.
AND NOT ONE OF THEM EVER TURNED AGAINST HIM BEFORE.
NOW WHY DON'T YOU LEAVE MY OFFICE...MR. VINCENT?!
YOU LOOKIN' FOR THAT LIGHT-SKINNED CHICK WHO PAYS OFF THE DRUKE?

FOR A FIN YOU CAN FIND HER THROUGH SLY THE FLY...OR YOU CAN SAVE YOUR DOUGH FOR PIE IN THE SKY.
IT'S YOURS. BUT YOU'D BETTER HAVE SOMETHING
OH, I GOT IT. I SEE HER SASHAYIN' DOWN TO THE STORYVILLE INN, TO LISTEN TO THE LION. HARD TO MISS THAT ONE--SHE'S A FINE PIECE O'CAKE.
HEY! YOU OUGHT TO KNOW BETTER THAN TO TALK THAT WAY--ABOUT A WHITE WOMAN.
ABOUT A--
--HOKAY, MR. CHARLIE. IT'S YOUR FIN-- YOU SAY ANYTHING YOU WANT.
CARDONA THOUGHT SHE WAS "SLUMMING" BUT COMING HERE WASN'T LIKE CLUB-HOPPING ON LENOX AVENUE HERE YOU DIDN'T FIND EVERY "LULU BELLE" PUTTIN' ON THE RITZ, OR HOWEVER THE DAMN SONG GOES.
STORYVILLE INN
COCKTAILS JAZZ DINING
112
BAR
ALL NITE
HERE WAS THE REASON FOR THAT LOOK YOU CATCH IN THE EYES OF NEGRO MEN WHEN YOU LOOK UP SUDDENLY AND FIND THEM STARING.
12


ONLY HERE YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO CATCH THEM BY SURPRISE TO SEE IT


WELL, WELL. ONE OF OUR BLEACHED BRETHREN. WHAT DO YOU PLAY, SON?
PLAY?
YOUR AXE, HONEY. ONLY WHITE BOYS WHO COME TO HEAR THE LION ARE DOWNTOWN JAZZBOS LOOKING TO LEARN SOME NEW RIFFS.
NO, NO. I'M JUST ASKING SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT A FRIEND OF MINE...MARGO LANE.

DON'T KNOW ANY MARGOS. DON'T KNOW ANY LANES.
THEN HOW ABOUT MARGARET LORN?


DON'T KNOW ANY MARGARETS EITHER, BABY. BUT I DO KNOW A LORN, SORT OF... A DELORN, SHE IS.
AND WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH HER?

EVERYTHING YOU KNOW.
GONNA TAKE SOME VAMPING TO MAKE WHAT I KNOW SOUND LIKE TWENTY BUCKS' WORTH. BUT THAT'S WHAT JAZZ IS ALL ABOUT, RIGHT?
AS HE TALKED, HE KEPT PLAYING..

...AND IT WAS LIKE NOTHING I'D EVER HEARD BEFORE
I'VE HEARD PLENTY OF BLACK JAZZ--THE HOT STUFF, YOU KNOW, THE SCREAMING LUNCEFORD SWING AND THE ELLINGTON JUNGLE MUSIC
BUT THIS WAS LIKE CHURCH MUSIC, LIKE BELLS YOU HEAR FROM SOME CHURCH HAVING MIDNIGHT MASS WHEN THE TRAFFIC'S FINALLY DIED
SHE HIRED MR. DRUKE TO USE HIS CONNECTIONS, FIND HER SOMEBODY FROM NEW ORLEANS... SOMEBODY WHO KNEW THE OLD STORYVILLE SCENE.
HE FOUND ME.
THEN BETWEEN THE MUSICAL RIPPLES I STARTED HEARING SOMETHING FAMILIAR
. AND I SUDDENLY REALIZED HE WAS PLAYING "ALL OF ME." JUST A FRIENDLY SONG, AN OLD PAL, BUT HE MADE IT SOMETHING MYSTERIOUS AND HEARTBREAKING.
LIKE MARGO
I USED TO PLAY THE HOUSES DOWN THERE, WHEN I WAS A BOY THE GIRLS AND THE MADAMES, THEY'D ENTERTAIN THEIR CUSTOMERS DOWN IN THE PARLOR...
...AND BOYS LIKE ME AND JELLY ROLL WOULD SET THE MOOD. SOFT AND SWEET AS A LADY'S FACE, BUT FUNKY AS...
...YEAH.
THAT WAS JAZZ.
THEN THE WAR CAME, AND THE GOVERNMENT SHUT THE WHOLE THING DOWN. SAID STORYVILLE WAS BAD FOR THE SOLDIER-BOYS.
BURNED THE BUILDINGS TO THE GROUND. PUT A LOT OF PEOPLE OUT OF WORK
I DID OKAY IN THE TWENTIES. LOTS OF BLUES RECORDS, LOT OF NIGHTCLUBS. PLAYED BEHIND BESSIE SMITH FOR COLUMBIA
BESSIE
14

BESSIE JUST DIED, YOU KNOW. OR MAYBE YOU DIDN'T EVEN HEAR.
HAD A CAR CRASH AND BLED TO DEATH BECAUSE THEY WOULDN'T LET HER INTO AN ALL-WHITE HOSPITAL. DIDN'T CARE WHO SHE WAS. JUST WHAT COLOR...
...THESE USED TO BE REAL DIAMONDS, YOU KNOW. NOT JUST GLASS
NO RECORD DATES OR FANCY CLUBS SINCE THE HARD TIMES CAME. JUST PLACES LIKE THIS...AND RENT PARTIES.
PLAYING ALL NIGHT FOR A DIME A HEAD, JUST TO HELP SOME POOR FOOL WITH NO JOB KEEP A ROOF OVER HIS FAMILY.
ANYBODY GETS A FEW DOLLARS, YOU GOT TO SPREAD IT AROUND. HELP YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS.
THIS LITTLE LADY MR. DRUKE SENT, SHE HAD A FEW DOLLARS, AND SHE WANTED ME TO SEND IT TO SOMEBODY. TO EULA DELORN OF NEW ORLEANS.
ONCE A MONTH SHE'D COME IN, AND I'D SEND THE MONEY. AND THAT'S ALL I KNOW
NEW ORLEANS. I JUST CAN'T SEE MARGO COMING FROM SOME POOR FAMILY IN NEW ORLEANS, SOME... WHITE TRASH. SHE'S SUCH A LADY.
OR IS SHE?
I REMEMBERED SOMETHING I'D NEARLY SHUT OUT OF MY MIND..
...WHEN MARGO AND I CAME OUT OF THE WALDORF ONCE AND SAW TWO KIDS DOING A SHUFFLE DANCE.
SHE STARED LIKE SHE WAS HYPNOTIZED.
THEN A COP SHOWED UP, AND GOT TOO ROUGH WITH THE KIDS. AND MARGO SNAPPED.
13

NO CUTE MARGO WISE-CRACKS THAT TIME. SHE WAS THROWING THE DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN OBSCENITIES AT HIM.
SCREAMING WORDS THAT I WOULDN'T WHISPER TO A CHORUS GIRL.
SHE WOULDN'T TALK TO ME AFTER THAT. LOOKED AT ME LIKE I WAS RESPONSIBLE.
SHE WAS FINE THE NEXT DAY. BUT WE NEVER TALKED ABOUT IT.
I GOT THE ADDRESS OF EULA DELORN. THEN I LEFT THE LION ANOTHER FIVE, LIKE THAT COULD DO ANY GOOD.
WHEN I LEFT HE WAS PLAYING "LOVE FOR SALE" JUST AS PRETTY AND CHURCHY AS THE REST, BUT NOW I HEARD SOMETHING ELSE IN IT.
IT WAS BRUISED PRETTY. PRETTY THAT WAS BLEEDING INSIDE
LIKE MARGO?
WELCOME TO NEW ORLEANS
SHINE, MISTER?
Silver Crescent
TRACK 19
DEPART 7 00PM
ATLANTA
WASHINGTON
NEW YORK

NO SHINE, BUDDY. BUT I'LL PAY YOU TO LEAD ME TO RAMPART STREET... AND SOMETHING CALLED THE "KING JOHN NOVELTY SHOP."
BUT... BUT THAT'S MISS EULA'S PLACE! YOU DON'T WANT TO GO THERE!
DEPOT
CITY OF NEW ORLEANS
AND WHY DON'T I?
MY MAMMY SAY WHITE FOLK, THEY AFRAID OF THAT HOODOO!
HOODOO?
LIKE MISS EULA, SHE SELL IN THAT PLACE. ALL THEM GRIS-GRIS AND CANDLES AND GOAT HEADS AND DOLLS AND--
HOLD IT.
EULA DELORN... RUNS A VOODOO SHOP?
YOU LET ME TAKE YOU DOWN THE FRENCH MARKET, MISTER, SHOW YOU THINGS THAT THE WHITE FOLK BUY! YOU DON'T WANT TO GO TO NO RAMPART STREET!
OH, BUT I DO--
CAFÉ DU MONDE
SHINE!
--AND ABE LINCOLN SAYS SO!
NOW LEAD ON, MACDUFF.
AND HE LED ON... SLOWLY... AT THE PACE OF THE CITY.
AWAY FROM THE BREEZES OF THE RIVER AND THE FANNED AIR POURING OUT OF THE TOURIST JOINTS, UP WHERE THE AIR WAS LIKE HOT JELL-O YOU HAD TO SWIM THROUGH
I THOUGHT I KNEW WHAT "MUGGY" MEANT FROM NEW YORK JUST LIKE I THOUGHT I KNEW WHAT A NEGRO NEIGHBORHOOD WAS LIKE FROM HARLEM
17

I DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING.
THE SMELL OF MOLD FROM BUILDINGS THAT MUST HAVE BEEN ROTTING SINCE THE FRENCH LIVED HERE.
THE SMELL OF SEAFOOD IN THE SUN TOO LONG, AND FRYING ONIONS, AND SWEAT FULL OF BEER, AND INCENSE OUT OF THE DARK WINDOWS.
LOVER'S LANE DANCING
LOVER'S LANE
REGAL
...AND SOME SWEET OIL I'D NEVER SMELLED BEFORE ON THE BODIES OF THE LADIES.
AND MUSIC EVERYWHERE
EVERYWHERE
YEAH! BANG THEM KEYS, TUTS! MAKE THAT BOY DANCE!
MOVE THEM FEET, FESS! OH, YES!
I'D NEVER SEEN PEOPLE SO ALIVE.
AND YET THE MEN, WITHOUT EVEN LOOKING AT ME, WOULD STEP OFF THE SIDEWALK TO LET ME PASS.
AND THEY ALL KEPT THEIR HEARTS IN A SECRET PLACE.

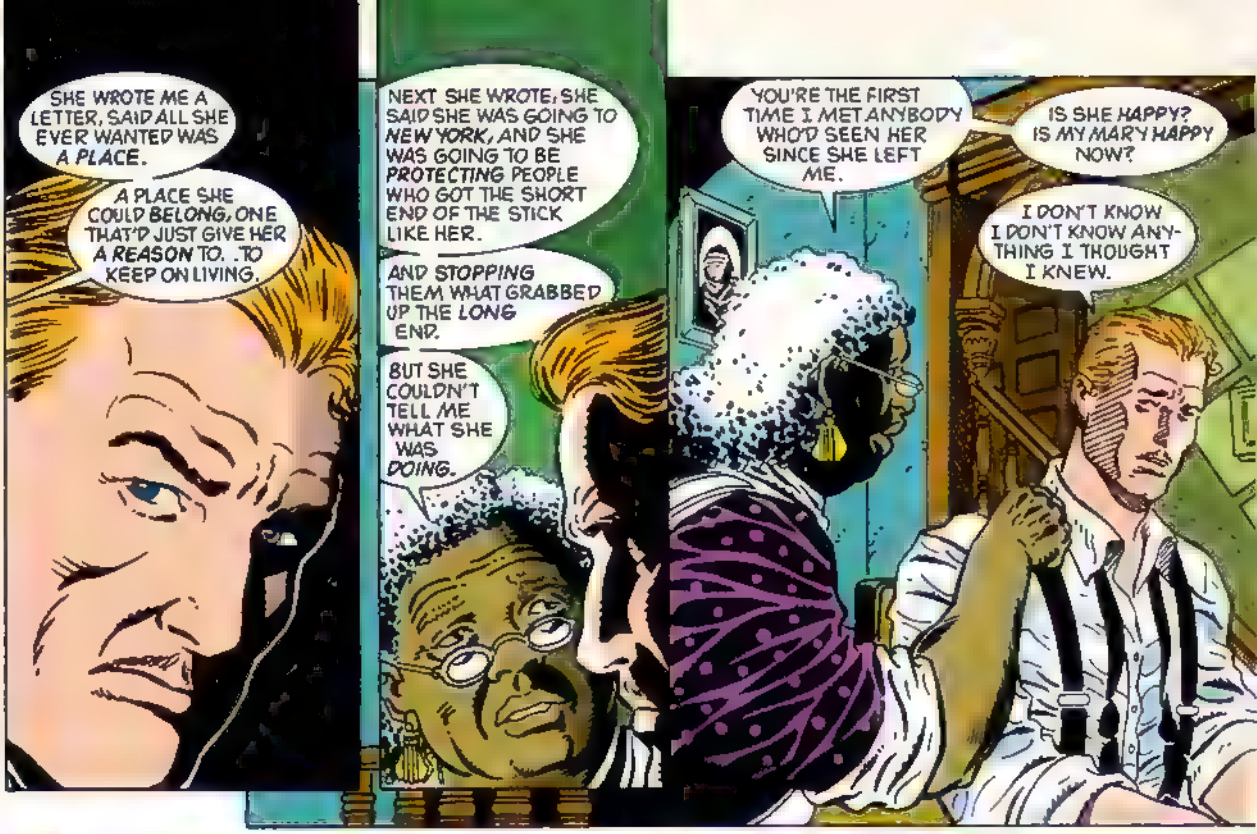
I...UH... I'M LOOKING FOR EULA DeLORN
AND WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH HER?
I'M...NOT SURE.
JUST... INFORMATION. ABOUT A GIRL IN NEW YORK NAMED MARGO OR MARGARET WHO SENDS MONEY TO--
MARY
THEN YOU KNOW HER?
I SHOULD, SHOULDN'T I?
I'M HER MOTHER.
13
13

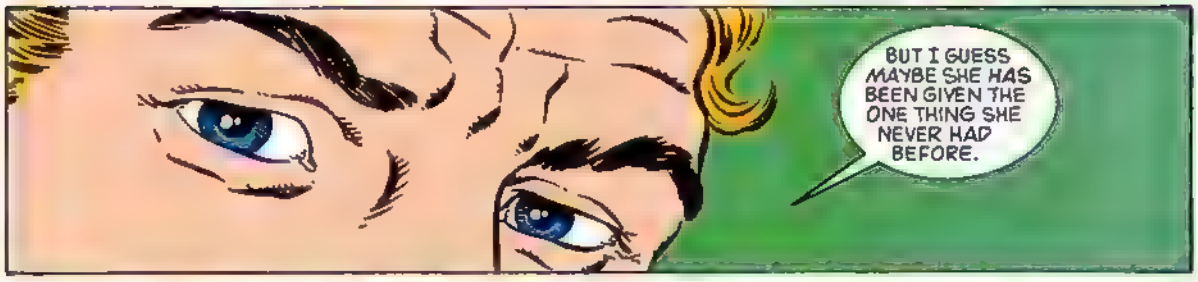
EAT THIS
MANY'S THE BLUES BEEN CURED BY RED BEANS AND RICE.
NOW JUST WHAT ARE YOU TO MY LITTLE GIRL?
JUST A. FRIEND. WE WORK TOGETHER... SOMETIMES. AND I THOUGHT ..
YOU THOUGHT MAYBE IT'D BE MORE THAN "JUST FRIENDS." BUT THAT WAS BEFORE YOU FOUND OUT HER MAMA WAS COLORED.
WELL, NOW YOU KNOW WHY SHE NEVER TOLD YOU.
I ALWAYS TOLD HER, DON'T DENY WHAT YOU ARE. AND SHE ALWAYS SAID, "BUT I'M NOTHING--
"--NOT BLACK, NOT WHITE, NOT A MARRIAGE-CHILD... NOT EVEN A LOVE-CHILD. JUST A LEFTOVER...
"...AND EVEN THE WHORE-HOUSE THAT MADE ME AIN'T THERE NO MORE."
THE... WHAT?
IT WAS RIGHT UP THERE, UP IBERVILLE AND LIBERTY OH, THAT WAS A FINE DISTRICT BEFORE THE WAR.
AND WHERE I TOOK RESIDENCE WAS THE FINEST COLORED PARLOR-HOUSE IN THE CITY
S P
"WE HAD A BOY PLAYED THE PRETTIEST PIANO. AND OUR SPORTING GIRLS... OH, THEY WERE THE GOODS!
'THEY USED TO CALL ME THE 'ETHIOPIAN EMPRESS.' CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT NOW, LOOKING AT ME?
23

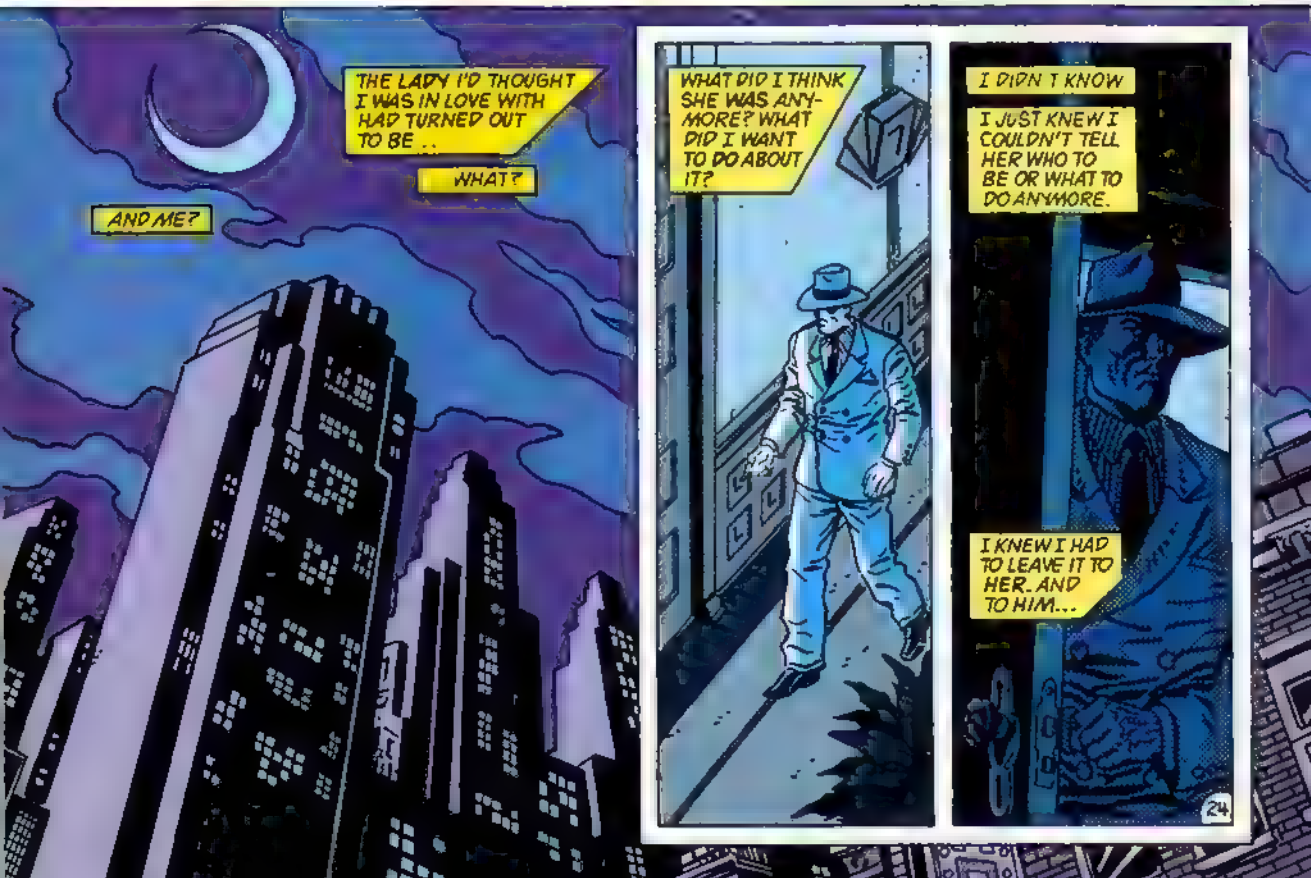
"WE HAD THE FINEST WHITE MEN COMING TO SPEND THEIR MONEY JUDGES AND POLICEMEN AND PREACHERS.
"AND A RICH ALDERMAN WHO TOOK A SPECIAL FANCY TO ME OH, I THOUGHT HE WAS A FINE MAN.
"UNTIL THE GOVERNMENT CLOSED THE HOUSES, AND HE LED THE WAY
"JUST FOR THE NEWSPAPERS.
WELCOME
CONDEMNED
I DIDN'T HAVE NO WAY TO LIVE THEN, BUT I DIDN'T ASK FOR ANYTHING NOT FOR ME.
"I JUST ASKED HIM TO PAY FOR SCHOOLING MY LITTLE FAIR-SKIN GIRL, MY LITTLE MARY...BECAUSE SHE WAS HIS. AND HE KNEW SHE WAS.
"WELL, HE OFFERED TO GIVE HER MONEY, SURE ENOUGH...
"...BUT NOT FOR WHAT HE SHOULD HAVE. NOT FOR WHAT A FATHER SHOULD HAVE.
"I TOOK HER FROM THERE, AND I SWORE TO HER THAT THAT WOULD BE THE LAST WE EVER HAD TO DO WITH WHITE MEN.
21

'BUT I HAD A MAN, THEN HENRY. AND HE LOVED MY LITTLE MARY LIKE SHE WAS HIS OWN.'
"AND WHEN HE HEARD WHAT HAPPENED, HE GOT MAD
"MAD THE WAY NO COLORED MAN CAN AFFORD TO GET.
'WHAT COULD WE DO?
"I SWORE TO LEARN THE OLD WAYS, THE REVENGE-WAYS THAT NO WHITE MAN COULD UNDERSTAND OR FIGHT.
"MY MARY SWORE TO BE A BAD GIRL.
"SHE LEARNED TO GET MONEY HOWEVER SHE COULD, AND SHE LEARNED TO FIGHT--BAD AS ANY BOY..."

. . BUT I DIDN'T HAVE THE HATE IN ME. WHO CAN YOU HATE? WHO MADE THE WORLD LIKE IT IS?
NOW I JUST SELL THINGS THAT BRING FOLKS HEALTH AND MONEY. AND LOVE.
AND MARY?
OH, MY MARY! SHE WAS MY GIRL, SURE ENOUGH! SHE TRIED SO HARD TO BE BAD-- BUT ALL THE MONEY SHE MADE, SHE SPENT IT ON ALL THE SOFTEST, PRETTIEST THINGS!
JUST LIKE A PARLOR-HOUSE LADY, SHE WAS!
"THEN SHE LEARNED SOMETHING THAT WHEN SHE DRESSED UP FANCY NOBODY KNEW WHO SHE WAS... OR WHO HER MAMA WAS.
"SHE COULD BE WHATEVER SHE WANTED TO BE
"SHE STARTED GOING TO THE PICTURE-SHOWS, TO SEE HOW THE RICH WHITE FOLKS LOOK AND ACT
'AND SHE READ THOSE MAGAZINES TO LEARN HOW THEY TALK.
"BUT SHE STILL COULDN'T BE JUST WHAT SHE WANTED. NOT IN NEW ORLEANS.
"TOO MANY PEOPLE KNEW HER IN NEW ORLEANS..."
.. SO SHE WENT TO CHICAGO, MARRIED HER RICH BOY. SHE SENT ME MONEY, TOO. DON'T MATTER WHAT THEY DO TO HER, SHE'S A GOOD GIRL, MY MARY.
BUT SHE DIDN'T BELONG THERE, NOT WHEN THINGS WENT AGAINST HER.


SHE WROTE ME A LETTER, SAID ALL SHE EVER WANTED WAS A PLACE.
A PLACE SHE COULD BELONG, ONE THAT'D JUST GIVE HER A REASON TO. . TO KEEP ON LIVING.
NEXT SHE WROTE, SHE SAID SHE WAS GOING TO NEW YORK, AND SHE WAS GOING TO BE PROTECTING PEOPLE WHO GOT THE SHORT END OF THE STICK LIKE HER.
AND STOPPING THEM WHAT GRABBED UP THE LONG END.
BUT SHE COULDN'T TELL ME WHAT SHE WAS DOING.
YOU'RE THE FIRST TIME I MET ANYBODY WHO'D SEEN HER SINCE SHE LEFT ME.
IS SHE HAPPY? IS MY MARY HAPPY NOW?
I DON'T KNOW I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING I THOUGHT I KNEW.


BUT I GUESS MAYBE SHE HAS BEEN GIVEN THE ONE THING SHE NEVER HAD BEFORE.


THE LADY I'D THOUGHT I WAS IN LOVE WITH HAD TURNED OUT TO BE . .
WHAT?
AND ME?
WHAT DID I THINK SHE WAS ANYMORE? WHAT DID I WANT TO DO ABOUT IT?
I DIDN'T KNOW
I JUST KNEW I COULDN'T TELL HER WHO TO BE OR WHAT TO DO ANYMORE.
I KNEW I HAD TO LEAVE IT TO HER. AND TO HIM...
24

..THE SHADOW
WELCOME HOME, AGENT VINCENT. HAVE YOU LEARNED WHAT YOU HAD TO LEARN?
BUT YOU-- YOU WERE GOING TO CHINA!
SOME PREPARATIONS TAKE LONGER THAN OTHERS. I AM NOW READY TO MAKE MY VOYAGE...
...IF YOU ARE READY TO JOIN ME.
NEXT: SHANGHAI!

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Dear SHADOW STRIKES Crew:

I write to you in the wake of THE SHADOW STRIKES! #22. As always, I was thoroughly pleased with the total package that the entire crew seems to be able to consistently deliver. The current storyline with Shiwan Khan is nothing less than gripping as we actually get a chance to see Lamont Cranston sweat under pressure! (pg. 17) rather than showering you all in well-deserved praise, however, I will instead pose a few questions which have been plaguing me for some time which only you can answer.

(1) I have noticed that periodically the letter column is omitted from this, one of my favorite comics. Is this due to lack of space or lack of caring readers' letters? I've always thought the letter column to be a fantastic place for readers to communicate and voice their opinions to one another and the creators. Which leads to my second question:

(2) The comic shops which I frequent in my area usually only carry one or two copies of THE SHADOW STRIKES! They claim that the title is just not popular enough to warrant more copies. Is this just a regional anomaly in my area or is this true all over? Which leads to my third and final question:

(3) Is THE SHADOW STRIKES! in danger of extinction? I have yet to recover from the abrupt cancellation of THE SHADOW leaving Lamont (or Kent.. whoever) with no mystic ring and a Robo body. So, in waiting for the probably-never-to-come promised special wrapping that story up, I would not wish to see this incarnation of The Shadow vanish as well.

I'm quite sure that the whole staff is quite busy and might think it unimportant to answer the fears of a paranoid reader, but I would appreciate a response to these queries, if not in the endangered letter column, then by mail.

Jon Reddick
Loughman, FL

Thanks for the good word. Its much appreciated. Now, down to the nitty gritty. Let me answer the most important question first. THE SHADOW STRIKES! is not currently in danger of being cancelled. While our numbers are not phenominal, there are enough of you out there to sustain us for now, but it certainly wouldn't hurt if you could persuade a few friends to give us a try, and it also wouldn't hurt if a few more of you wrote in. Yes, that is the answer to question 1. We'd like to include a letter column in each issue, but sometimes the missives are a bit sparse...but good, real good. All of the letters we get are quite good and intelligently written. Whew! As to your second question, well I can only suggest you work on increasing demand. I'm pretty sure your local retailers will respond appropriately by increasing the supply. That's simple market reality for you.

• • • • •

Dear Mr. Augustyn,

Let me start my letter by saying that THE SHADOW STRIKES! is the single BEST comic out at this time. But, of course you already know that. I have only two questions that I'm sure are on the lips of every pulp fan.

(1) Since the Shadow is owned by Condé Nast, will there be a WHO'S WHO entry on him? After all, there was a WHO'S WHO IN STAR TREK and they were not a DC property. I spent the last six years waiting for a Shadow entry. What's the hold up?

(2) Will we be seeing the Avenger at all in the upcoming issues of THE SHADOW STRIKES!?

I really hope you get a chance to answer my questions.

Paul D. Gallarage
Jersey City, NJ

Sorry, Paul, but currently we haven't any plans for a Shadow entry in WHO'S WHO. The present incarnation is concentrating on denizens of DC Universe continuity, of which the Shadow is not a part. But, there may be future WHO'S WHO projects in which the world of the Shadow could play a part. As for the Avenger, there are no plans at present for further appearances.

• • • • •

Hey, Kids—

Just finished THE SHADOW STRIKES! #22 and I wanted to congratulate everyone involved with "Simply Everywhere" for their fine work(s). I'm glad Shiwan Khan is making his obligatory return appearance and, from the looks of things, he seems to be pretty well orchestrating this particular dance.

I sure hope Yat Soon and his Tongs will be able to provide the help that the black avenger is going to require if he hopes to remain alive. Else he's toast.

Uncle Elvis
Dawson Springs, KY

Cinnamon, raisin, white, rye, or whole wheat?

• • • • •

Dear Brian,

Re. SHADOW STRIKES! #21

"The Revenge of Shiwan Khan." So soon? It wasn't all that long ago that the gentleman crimelord last tangled with the Shadow, and ordinarily I'd frown upon Khan returning so soon, but this is different. Khan is the antithesis of the Shadow. The ultimate enemy. There aren't enough foes for the Shadow to truly have a Rogues Gallery. Until such is established, we can be content with Khan showing up every few months.

To all the doubting critics who think that the artwork loses a few points with Baretto's departure, FORGET IT! Whigham and Fernandez have carved their own niche in these pages. I am reminded of the likes of Giacoia in a lot of places, which has me thinking that this may be done as a tribute. I score this a 10, no matter what.

Brian, is there any sort of possibility that a Shadow/Batman teamup can be done (with the blessings of Condé Nast, of course)? One such story was done nearly twenty years back. If "imaginary stories" like GOTHAM BY GASLIGHT are in vogue again, then this one is inevitable.

See you in thirty.

Jacob Gilbert
Troy, NY

What, only 10? On the teamup, don't know at this point, but not likely. Then again, never say never.

• • • • •

Dear Shadowy Ones:

I wouldn't have any serious objections should Rod Whigham permanently replace Eduardo Barreto on THE SHADOW STRIKES! Whigham has conquered the stiffness in his style that bothered me in his initial DOC SAVAGE books, and by the end of that run he was doing very well and had become an accomplished "period artist." He's more than just a yeoman artist right now, so let's use him more. I read that Tom Grummett is switching over to the SUPERMAN line, so does that mean that Barreto will be returning to NEW TITANS, where he served so honorably for years? Would still like to see E.R. Cruz do an issue or three.

I also agree that the Shadow should be drawn with the bandana raised over his mouth for maximum spook appearance. Also, avoid drawing his shoes...he should seem like he's floating on air.

As regards #21, the opening gambits in another war with the dapper Mr. Shiwan Khan; the story progressed at a good clip despite the use of a great deal of pantomime panels, and a minimum of dialogue up until page 16.

Any plans to use Richard Henry Benson in more DC works? Do you still have the rights to him?

I don't think the Shadow's people would be such chumps, but there should be some interesting events resulting from their capture.

Charles D. Brown
Brentwood, NY

• • • • •

Dear Dan,

Re: THE SHADOW STRIKES! #21

Ooooh, down and dirty. And I like seeing this many of the Shadow's agents.

Rod Whigham did do a fine job this issue. But to understand the pleas for Eduardo Barreto look at the cover...

Uh, oh, excuse me for zoning out there. His work has that effect!

More, more.

Melissa Page
Nortonville, KY

Eduardo Barreto is currently hard at work on MASTER OF THE FUTURE, the sequel to GOTHAM BY GASLIGHT, which is being penned by Brian Augustyn. (Where have I heard that name before?) Fans of Eduardo Barreto's work should check out WHO'S WHO IN THE DC UNIVERSE #13 for his rendering of Lex Luthor. It's a beaut!

• • • • •

To reiterate Dan Thorsland's plea of a few months back, PLEASE WRITE. We would love to see more letters. I know you can do it.

—Bob Kahan

NEXT ISSUE: It's off to China to face off finally with Shiwan Kahn! Don't miss "The Coast" by Gerry Jones, Rod Whigham, and Gerry Fernandez. See you in thirty.

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Super-Summit '91

Orlando, Florida—home of palm trees, warm temperatures, amusement parks, alligator wrestling, and... *Superman?!!*

No, Superman hasn't relocated from the gleaming skyline of Metropolis to the sunny skies of Orlando, but the creative people responsible for his ongoing adventures visited that central-Florida vacation haven for a few days recently, meeting for the "Super-Summit," a now-annual massive plotting session where SUPERMAN editor Mike Carlin *(abetted by assistant editor Dan Thorsland)* assembled his super-team of writers and artists to collectively chart out upcoming storylines for the Man of Steel. This group of ten, quite possibly the largest creative cabal working on any single superhero, also included Jerry Ordway, Dan Jurgens, Roger Stern, Bob McLeod, Dennis Janke, Brett Breeding, and two new additions to the super-squad: Louise Simonson and Jon Bogdanove, the writer-artist team behind the new SUPERMAN: THE MAN OF STEEL. I was lucky enough to witness the final stages of this two-day confab *(yeah, like they had to twist my arm to go to Florida!!)*, along with DC's Dick Giordano, Pat Bastienne, and Terri Cunningham.

Many fans of the Man of Steel are intrigued by the tight, interlocking continuity that flows from Superman book to book, but achieving that flow is no easy matter. It requires each and every writer and artist who contributes to the four series to work in harmony with the others, all under the orchestration of maestro Mike Carlin.

Each of the two days of the summit commenced with breakfast (for the early risers in the group), which later led to the beginning of the actual plotting sessions in a sizeable meeting room at the Orlando Sheraton World hotel. The room looked like any other wherein businessfolk would meet: there was a long meeting table, notepads and pencils for everyone, a pad of oversized paper for wall charts, and lots of coffee and doughnuts. This is the environment where you'd expect to see businessmen in three-piece suits discussing profits, losses, and takeovers, but this time the room was filled with creators in T-shirts and tennis shoes discussing Lois Lane, Mister Mxyzptlk, and the ever-baffling Bibbo.

Using a certain much-anticipated wedding as a plotting goal, Mike Carlin opened the floor each session, with the entire group participating by suggesting ideas for storylines and subplots on a series-to-series, issue-to-issue basis. While you might expect that the writers were the only driving forces behind the plotting, each and every member of the super-team contributed story possibilities. "It was a very open-minded atmosphere," Carlin notes. "No idea was too silly to throw out on the floor. We've rarely had this much enthusiasm. The only restrictions we had were the restrictions of the characters themselves and their characterizations."

(l. to r.) Roger Stern, Brett Breeding and Jerry Ordway on the Superboy TV show set.

Ideas were flying back and forth between creators faster than a speeding bullet. While I can't give away many details, a few things to look for in the months to come are financial troubles for the city of Metropolis; the emergence of a man who claims to be the late Lex Luthor's heir; a guest appearance by Aquaman; the return of Supergirl, Humbug, and Bloodsport; and *big* problems for Jimmy Olsen... oh, yeah—the super-team also discussed a *wedding* or two, as well.

All the story ideas and subplots were compiled on a series of large wall charts, with events flowing from series to series in order of publication. Carlin later converted the wall charts into smaller file-sized ones that were photocopied and distributed to each member of the creative team. As it stands now, stories have been plotted through June 1993, with the events of the next year tightly constructed, and the stories beyond that point only loosely outlined. Those later stories will be tightened *(or tossed!)* on a second pass during Super-Summit '92 with another year of skeletal work going onto that meeting's charts.

But what about the personalities involved? I'm sure you've often read or heard of accounts where talented people working collaboratively argued, bickered, and fought, with egos clashing and chaos ensuing. If you're looking for news like that, check out the latest supermarket tabloid, because the super-team got along famously. Any disagreements that transpired were merely about stories—no personal spats—and were resolved by a vote among the group members. "It was a 'majority rules' situation," adds Mike Carlin, who notes that even he, as the series' editor, followed the desires of the democracy, in an effort to keep every creator and contributor on equal footing. But while cooperation was the key here and no one person's voice carried any extra weight, the super-team acknowledged Jerry Ordway as its senior statesman, turning to him when a dilemma needed a solution or just for inspiration. "Jerry is the granddaddy of the group," Carlin reminds us, "and a lot of the tone of all the current SUPERMAN books is defined by what he's done." That seems appropriate, since Jerry's been with the Man of Steel since the character's rebirth in 1986. And when I asked the super-team how they felt about each other, Dennis Janke replied, "There's a lot of love in this room," a statement followed by guffaws and other bizarre noises. Well, maybe not *love*, but at least creative harmony...

All in all, the Orlando Super-Summit '91 was productive and fun for everyone involved, and *you'll* get to see the fruit of the super-team's efforts by following the four SUPERMAN titles. If you think you know everything there is to know about the Man of Steel, you're *wrong*—there're lots of shocks and surprises in store for Superman in the months to come.

See you next week.

—Michael Eury

SOLO FLIGHT
BLACK Canary
Written by Sarah Byam Layouts by Trevor Von Eeden
Finished artwork by Dick Giordano
Back for vengeance --in a miniseries all her own.
Four Issues
New Format

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IT'S NOT THE
SAME OLD THING.

The Addams Family

NOVEMBER 22.